565 554 461 Seiyids do not carry arms,[1] nor have they troops to support them, so that instead of relying on the sanction of arms to maintain their authority they rely on their descent from the Prophet and the reverence which is given to them on account of their ancestry. They are extremely jealous of their privileges as Seiyids; realizing that their influence depends on the respect shown to them, they adhere keenly to such customs as the kissing of their hands and avoid any form of manual labour. They are usually comparatively well educated, and exercise influence on this account.

000 Some years ago a movement started in the East Indies to restrict the power of the Seiyids. It is said to have had its origin in a squabble over a school, but its roots were deeply set in the growing contact of the Hadhrami immigrants with western influence which produced a liberal class keen on modernisation. The Seiyids were innately conservative and mistrusted the encroachment of western civilization. It cannot be said that the struggle between the church and the laity is yet over, but it is apparent that the victory will ultimately be with liberal tendencies rather than diehard conservatism. According to most accounts the 'Irshadis, as the rebels against ecclesiastical predominance termed themselves, never set up actual organizations in the Hadhramaut itself, but there is no doubt that their tenets have made considerable headway there.

565 554 In Qu'aiti territory the influence of the Seiyids has officially gone. They are not allowed to interfere in politics though they are given respect for their descent. As long as the majority of them adhere to their mediaeval ecclesiasticism it is clearly right that they should be out of power. Unofficially, however, some of the best of them still play an important and indeed essential part in those districts not yet under direct Government control. In Kathīri territory they have more influence, but the leading families have moved with the advancing tide of progress, allied themselves with the forces of law and order, and are amongst the keenest advocates of modern methods in the country.

Sheikhs.

● 793 565 554 162 Before the advent of Seiyid Ahmed bin 'Isa in the ninth century and the gradual growth of the religious influence of the Seiyids, the Sheikhs were the principal ecclesiastical influence in the country. They probably took the place of an earlier ecclesiastical hierarchy formed by the priesthood of the old religion. Though they definitely take precedence after the Seiyids, they resemble them in that they exercise much the same privileges. Like them, they are a very much respected class, are better educated than the tribesmen, and do not as a rule bear arms.

565 162 The principal families are: Al 'Amūdi living in Du'an, Āl Is-hāq, Āl Bā Wazīr living at Gheil, Wadi al 'Ain, and other places, Bā

[1] There are in fact a few families of Seiyids who do carry arms and are indistinguishable from Beduins.

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elected Imam, he goes outside the acknowledged boundaries of his kingdom (the present Imam acknowledges no boundaries, nor have any of his predecessors) he ceases to be Imam, and a new Imam must be elected. The Imam is usually elected during the lifetime of his predecessor, so that when one dies the country is not without an Imam.

Now all these conditions are those pertaining to divine Kings. There is little doubt that they are ancient pre-Islamic conditions, and it is possible that they are taken from the conditions under which the Tobbas of Himyar became King and which governed the ancient kingship of Sheba. Some inscriptions made by the Tobbas, who ruled over Axum in Abyssinia, as well as Saba and Eastern Yemen, are countersigned, as it were, by a Minister who styles himself "The Sacrifice"—in itself a very significant title. These conditions must have been accepted by the Persian and Abyssinian rulers of the Yemen, and both they and subsequent rulers must have thought it as well to assume the kingship in its ancient form.

H 622

In the same way as the Imam is elected and proclaimed, so under him each confederation elects its Chiefs and petty Chiefs within their tribes and families. The central tribes elect their Chiefs, who become the heads of confederations, and each tribe elects its leaders within itself; only in the case of the smaller units, from the confederation downwards, there appear to be no such conditions as I have mentioned regarding the Imamate. All these Chiefs are figureheads who can exert a strong influence but who are not expected to rule.

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The scene thus represented is one of the greatest interest to anthropologists and to sociologists. It is a stage in the development of nations. Before the formation of kingdoms and before Islam, Arabia was a land of many gods. Each of these gods was the particular god of a tribe, and his worship was in the hands of a priestly tribe who elected a Priest-Chief. He was, as it were, a divine Chief, and doubtless it was his main duty to ensure fertility, which entails all the priestly functions of bringing rain, guarding against disease and supervising agriculture. Both the magic and the custom were higher than him. He could not change either but was himself ruled by both. In inter-tribal disputes he spoke for the tribe and not for himself as ruler of the tribe. When Islam came, the tribal god vanished, but the Priest-Chief was left as a figurehead, with a vague aura of holiness but with nevertheless a considerable loss of his power, which was never very great. This is the position of the elected hereditary Chief in the Aden Protectorate to-day.

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It is obvious that such Chiefs cannot be expected to rule their confederations and tribes unless they obtain military power. For the most part they are reluctant to do this. At one time it was the policy of the Government to give arms and ammunition to the Chiefs so as to strengthen their hands against their more unruly tribesmen. The hereditary elected Chiefs, however, did not respond to this policy as they were supposed to do, but gave the arms away to brigands in the form of bribes. The Suzerains avidly accepted these presents from the Government, for they understood rule as we do, and have held their positions through this understanding. This, by contrast between the two types of Chief, throws a strong light on the accepted position of the hereditary Chiefs. There is,